

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03301 071431Z
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-06 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OIC-02 IOE-00 /064 W
-----071441Z 056322 /42
P 071304Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1732
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UN
SUBJECT: FARAKKA AND UN WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA CALLED IN THE CHARGE ON MARCH 7 TO EXPRESS GOI HOPE THAT THE UN WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE MIGHT AVOID ANY DISCUSSION OF THE FARAKKA ISSUE WHICH MIGHT UPSET THE ATMOSPHERE FOR PRODUCTIVE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS IN APRIL.

2. MEHTA EXPLAINED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO BUSINESS LEAVING INDIA DURING THIS IMPORTANT ELECTION PERIOD, HE WOULD BE LEADING INDIA'S DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WOULD BE GENERAL DISCUSSIONS OF RIPARIAN PROBLEMS AT MAR DEL PLATA AS MOST NATIONS HAVE SUCH PROBLEMS BUT HE HOPED THE BILATERAL FARAKKA ISSUE WOULD NOT BE PLAYED UP. HE RECALLED THAT THE INDIAN DELEGATION TO THE LAST BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON FARAKKA HAD SUGGESTED NEW BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH BANGLADESH IN APRIL AND CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A DISPOSITION WITHIN THE GOI TO DISCUSS A FURTHER COMPROMISE AT THAT TIME. NOW WITH ELECTIONS UNDERWAY HE COULD NOT, OF COURSE, SPEAK FOR ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT. YET, HE SAID, ULTIMATELY THERE MUST BE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT INVOLVING A SHARED SACRIFICE AND A
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SHARED ALLOCATION OF WATER. THE DIFFICULTY WAS THAT WHILE INDIA KNOWS THE OPTIMUM WATER LEVELS FOR ITS TECHNICAL PURPOSES, IT DOES NOT KNOW THE "DANGEROUS MINIMUM LEVELS." THE CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS EQUALLY TRUE ON THE BANGLADESH SIDE. MEHTA WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT WITH BANGLADESH, THE GOI WAS NOW TRYING TO REDUCE ITS DRAWINGS OF WATER. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE,

HOWEVER, THAT FLOWS THIS YEAR WERE PARTICULARLY LOW.

3. MEHTA SAID HE WAS RELIEVED THAT SO FAR MENTION OF FARAKKA IN THE WEST BENGAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN TEMPERATE AND HE HOPED THIS WOULD CONTINUE DURING THE BALANCE OF THE CAMPAIGN. HE HOPED THAT BANGLADESH WOULD ALSO SEE THAT POLEMICS COULD PREVENT LATER NEGOTIATIONS FROM TAKING PLACE IN A GOOD ATMOSPHERE. MEHTA SAID HE HAD INSTRUCTED THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER IN DACCA TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH GENERAL ZIA LAST WEEK BUT DID NOT YET HAVE A REPORT. MEHTA HIMSELF HOPES TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH ADMIRAL KHAN MAR DEL PLATA.

4. THE CHARGE TOLD MEHTA THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT THE USDEL TO MAR DEL PLATA WOULD BE FULLY BRIEFED ON THE FARAKKA ISSUE. HE REVIEWED THE POSITION WHICH THE US HAS TAKEN ON FARAKKA IN THE PAST AND SAID IT SEEMED VERY UNLIKELY THAT THE USDEL WOULD DO ANYTHING TO ENCOURAGE A POLEMIC DEBATE. (SOME GOI OFFICIALS SUSPECT THAT WE ENCOURAGED THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION AT THE UNGA LAST FALL). MEHTA SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THIS RESPONSE.

5. MEHTA WILL LEAVE FOR NEW YORK CITY ON THE MORNING OF SATURDAY, MARCH 12, REMAIN OVERNIGHT IN NEW YORK CITY (AMBASSADOR KEWAL SINGH WILL GO TO NEW YORK TO TALK WITH HIM) AND LEAVE FOR MAR DEL PLATA ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13. MEHTA HOPES THE INITIAL DEBATE WILL BE CONCLUDED IN TIME FOR HIM TO RETURN TO NEW DELHI BY MARCH 22 SO HE CAN BE HERE AFTER THEELECTIONS WHEN THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS PUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOGETHER.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WATER DIVERSION, WATER RIGHTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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